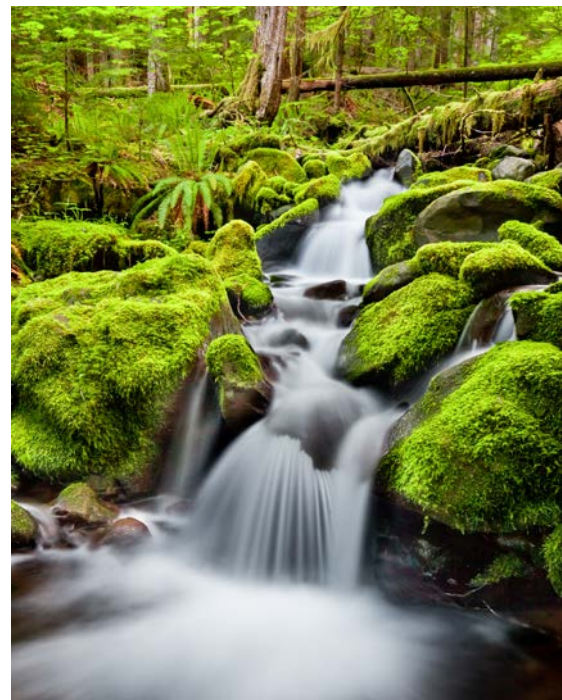


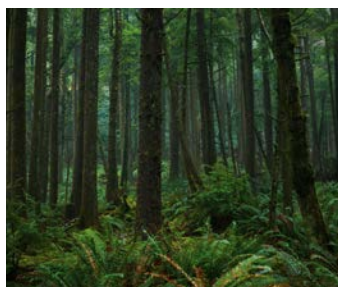


United States Department of Agriculture



WATER QUANTITY STRATEGY SURVEY

Survey Results | August 9, 2021



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United States Department of Agriculture

Introduction



Report to the Western Water Quantity Team

NRCS Washington took immediate steps to work with our stakeholders to develop and prioritize actions for water quantity issues identified in the State. We developed and conducted a survey to maintain consistency and ease of sorting and prioritizing the responses that we received from stakeholders. The recipients of the survey are the members of the WA State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC), The Washington Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WATCAC), and each WA Conservation District. We completed our stakeholder collaborative effort July 23, 2021 and are requesting consideration of our findings of the State's high priority actions into the Western Water Quantity Strategy session

The NHQ Presentation of the WWQ Strategy outlined broad areas where action could be taken to address water quantity issues. The broad categories are Interagency Coordination, Technology and Practice Standard Development, Program Implementation, Communications, and Staffing. Each category was further defined into sub-categories topics. A well represented group NRCS Washington Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) developed actions for each of the sub-category topics and then engaged our Stakeholder for input.

NRCS received 25 responses from the STAC, WATCAC and CDs from across the State. The following Washington Water Quantity Survey report provides a list of actions that have been prioritized by NRCS and our Stakeholders.



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Overview

A Western Water Strategy is being developed by NRCS National Leadership. Federal and state agencies, tribes and other partners are being requested to provide input and ideas on how we can best conserve water resources to increase drought resilience; make available water-related information so well-informed decisions on water use can be made; and determine viable conservation practices to reduce agricultural water use throughout the Western United States.

The following goals were developed after NRCS hosted a listening session of western United States stakeholders December 2020. NRCS Washington reviewed the goals and have developed activities that support the goals. There are nine goals and thirty-eight activities. Please read through the following goal statements and subsequent proposed activities and rank the activities as a high, medium, or low priority, based on your experience and expertise.

Your responses are important and will help shape the Western Water Quantity Strategy.

Thank you!



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Goal #1

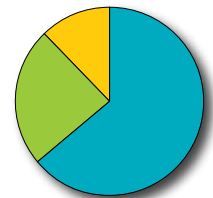
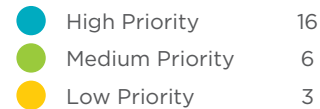


Pursuant to the Water Sub-cabinet established by the Executive Order on Modernizing America's Water Resource Management and Water, continue collaboration across agencies on advancing water conservation, forecasting, and related matters on private lands. Express support for continuation of the Water Sub-cabinet. Develop an implementation plan to collect climatological and soils data through:

1. Full build out of the Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) network replacing mission critical manual snow survey sites with automated real time sites, including enhanced sensor installations.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

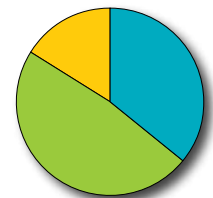
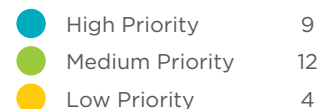
Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



2. Identification of new Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) site locations that would benefit limited resource areas.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

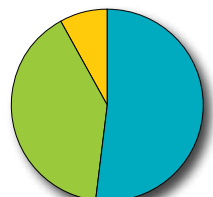
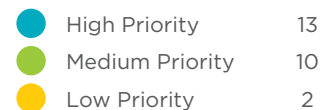
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



3. Full development of NRCS water supply forecasts in critical locations that currently have limited data or no data from which to make to water management decisions.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

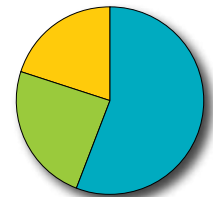
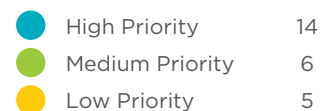
Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



4. Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN) sites for low elevation sites where climatic data is needed.

NRCS Priority?
NO

Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



5. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- Making sure data is accessible in partner formats, GIS, ArcGIS, Online, others...
- Work with National Weather Service to develop enhanced predictive models for longer term water supply.
- Offer leaf sensor or additional soil moisture remote sensing data programs.
- I think all of these are important, but resources and priority should be based on where they would do the best not by blanket action.
- Continue to research and implement water usage reduction methods in agriculture.



Goal #2

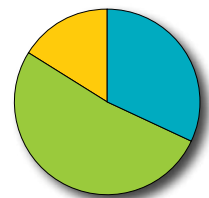
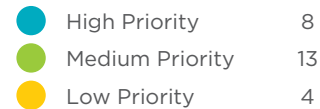


Establish MOUs with the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) within states to support cooperation at all levels to ensure consistent of the collaborative Water SMART initiative (WSI). An MOU would identify key points of contacts, support implementation of program policies and procedures, and reconcile technical criteria differences. Collaborate with the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) to:

6. Understand agencies policies and programs an identify program areas where partnering opportunities exist.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

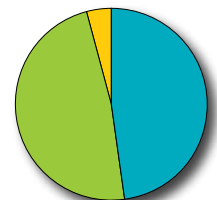
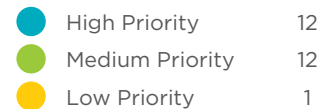
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



7. Collaborative efforts made by NRCS and USBR to provide program assistance to the agriculture community.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



8. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- Align PL 566 grant program with extensive groundwater studies performed by USBR.



Goal #3

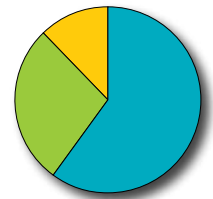
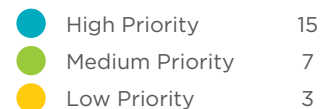


Encourage, to the extent practicable, high-level meetings between NRCS State Conservationists and state agency heads, Federal agency heads, Tribes and NGO's with water-related responsibilities to enhance overall coordination of activities. Utilize existing and recurring conferences and forums attended by agency leaders where appropriate:

9. Communicate with State level drought decision makers so they are aware and can identify areas where NRCS and States can collaborate on common issues and goals related to drought recovery.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

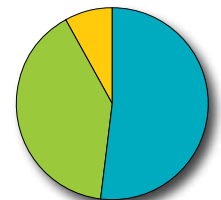
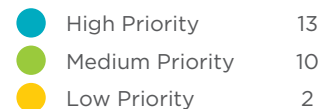
Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



10. Communicate with Federal and State level water quantity decision makers so they are aware and can identify areas where the responsible Federal and State agencies can collaborate on common issues and goals related to drought recovery.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

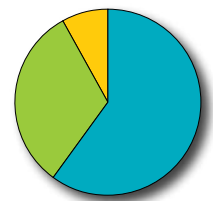
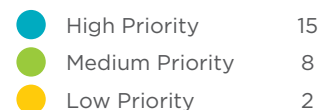
Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



11. Involve Non-Government Organization (NGO's) and other non-Government stakeholders to identify common goals that can be leveraged to assist the agricultural community.

NRCS Priority?
NO

Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



12. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- It appears to me that County and State level communication is needed with NRCS and others. These are the folks that are often working with water management.
- Production Agriculture needs to more involved in these types of meetings.
- Promote leaf & soil moisture sensor programs.
- Remember that there are too many examples where fish recovery and agricultural needs can work together.



Goal #4

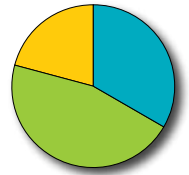
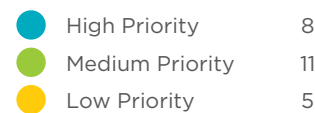


Encourage, to the extent practicable, within the State Technical Advisory Committee and Tribes, a specialized subcommittee for the purpose of water supply data collection, analysis coordination, and identification of resources needed. Recommended subcommittee members include NRCS, USBR, USACE, USGS, Tribes, State Water Resources Department, and other related entities.

13. Strengthen NRCS partnership with the Western Governors association and the Western Water Council to develop a coordinated approach to addressing water supply needs across the West.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

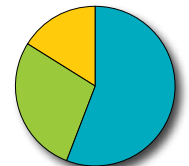
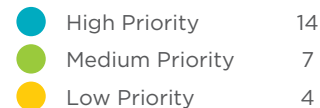
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



14. Develop a strategy to incorporate Tribes priorities across the West regarding for water supply data collection and forecasting.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

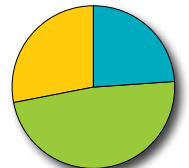
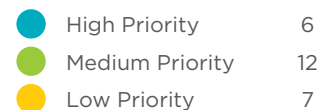
Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



15. Establish a statewide subcommittee of Federal and State stakeholder to collaborate on water supply data collection and analysis coordination.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

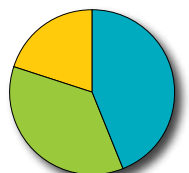
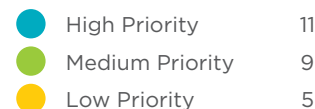
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



16. Identify practices that the State utilizes for water management activities, and cross walk them with similar NRCS FOTG Practice Standards and supplement standards where needed.

NRCS Priority?
NO

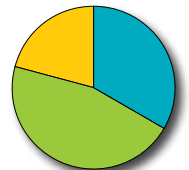
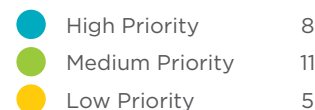
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



17. Identify practices that the State utilized for water management activities and develop Interim practice standards where it seems practical and enhances NRCS's ability to address water management issues across the State.

NRCS Priority?
NO

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



18. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- Usually it is state agencies that are in control of waters. Many states or even counties have committees already in place. This is where NRCS should spend their time. Not forming new committees. Tribes can come to the table or not. They have been invited. I don't think anything further is necessary for them.
- The questions seem to be focused on water supply, which hints at water as a resource for agriculture. Tribes and NGOs are much more likely to be focused on in-stream flows for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and promoting natural ecological processes and reducing the amount of management involved.
- This all sounds like "make work" activity.



Goal #5

Utilize the best available consumptive use data and incorporate in the State Irrigation Guide.

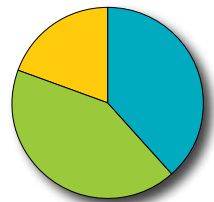


19. Review proposed update with STAC and Tribes to recommend adoption.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO

High Priority	10
Medium Priority	11
Low Priority	5

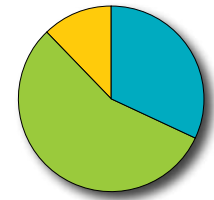


20. Provide training to all units of government and irrigation companies on how to access and utilize the data.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO

High Priority	8
Medium Priority	14
Low Priority	3



21. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- You must define and defend the best consumptive before it can be utilized.
- Utilize State's consumptive data for other users as part data collection. For example, farmland conversion to residential and irrigation district's water being allocated to lawns for mega mansions with little regard to commercial growers needs.



Goal #6

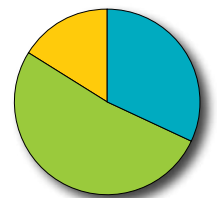
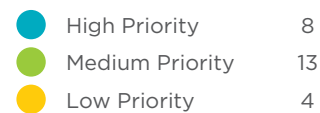


NRCS practices currently focus on irrigation efficiency, expand our contribution through prioritization of Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) multi-benefit irrigation infrastructure projects and utilization of Water Management Entity flexibility under the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

22. Develop a NRCS strategy to reward irrigation management over irrigation system upgrades.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

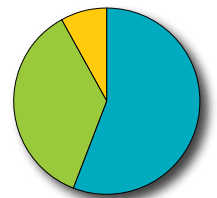
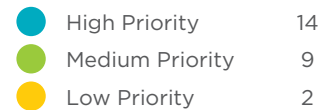
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



23. Request additional funding and develop a West Region specific RCPP Water management and water savings signup in the next Farm Bill. Limited funding under the current Farm Bill negatively effects NRCS's ability to have the program tools necessary to work with Partners to address water resource management activities in the West.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

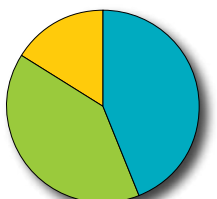
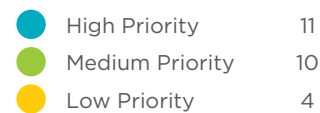
Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



24. Provide incentives to irrigators that apply for a NRCS Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) 118, "Irrigation Water Management Plan", for assessing their opportunities for water savings.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



25. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- Make NRCS funding easier to access for landowners and their NGO partners.



Goal #7

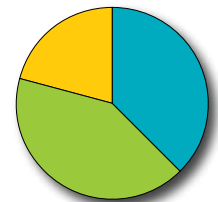
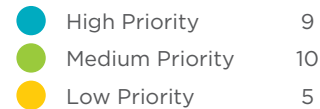


Continue utilization of the Water Smart Initiative, group projects, projects with Water Management Entities, and PL-566 projects all provide broader coordination of assistance to individual producers.

26. Pro-actively coordinate with the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) to identify eligible project areas that may benefit from Farm Bill (i.e.: PL-566, EQIP) water savings projects.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

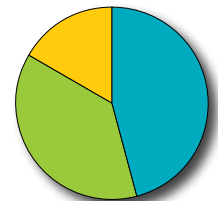
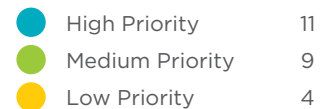
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



27. Develop a process where the design work is all completed with a focus on irrigation system delivery and energy savings for non-USBR irrigation districts.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

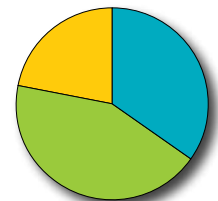
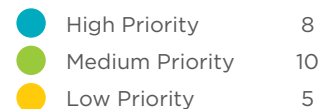
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



28. Revise NRCS policy that increases the payment limitation threshold for Water Management Entities (WMEs).

NRCS Priority?
YES!

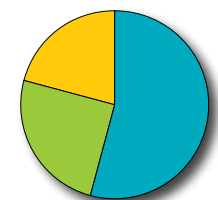
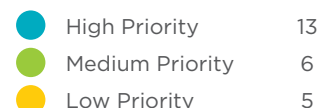
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



29. Revise NRCS policy allowing Water Reclamation Districts (WRD) to be considered a Water Management Entity (WME). Currently, WRD's are a subset of the State and of USBR and are currently not eligible for NRCS program participation.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



30. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- None provided.



Goal #8

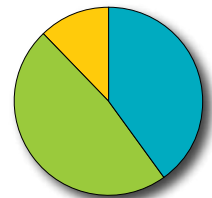
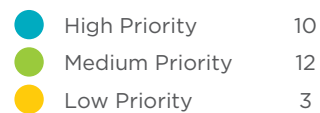
Educate NRCS staff of program opportunities.



31. As new standards are developed and adopted, provide training on enhancements and interim practices agency wide.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

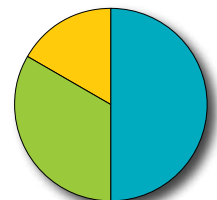
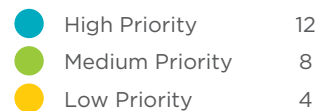
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



32. Provide cross training to staff across key USDA, Federal, Tribal, State, Local Agencies on funding opportunities being offered.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
YES!



33. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- Make NRCS funding easier to access for landowners and their NGO partners.



Goal #9

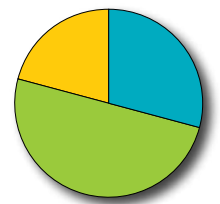
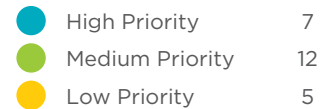


Increase water supply forecasting at the watershed level and field office staff in those areas experiencing long-term drought to help assist producers wishing to install practices that address water quantity resource concerns.

34. Increase the number or water supply forecast staff and Information Technology (IT) support staff at the NWCC to support expansion needs at the NRCS National Water and Climate Center (NWCC).

NRCS Priority?
YES!

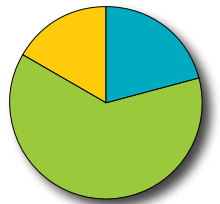
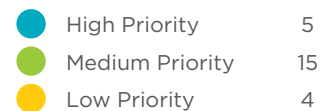
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



35. Increase staffing in Agency and State identified priority areas to support increased workload related to water quantity and efficiency.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

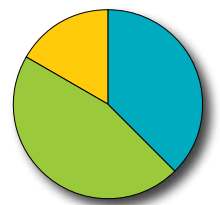
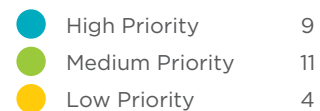
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



36. Develop and increase Technical Service Provider (TSP) capacity to support increased workload in priority areas. National NRCS developed and led training for recruiting TSPs would create consistency of TSP service and documentation throughout the West.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

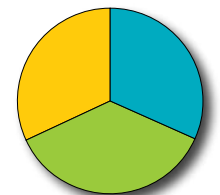
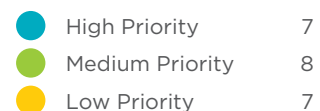
Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



37. Create in-State NRCS ad hoc team or create a permanent team to address water quantity efficiency issues and needs across the state.

NRCS Priority?
YES!

Survey Respondent Priority?
NO



38. Please describe any other suggested activities below.

- Develop and increase Conservation District capacity to support increased workload in priority areas.
- Increase partnership funding, training, and IWM planning with local Conservation Districts.
- Utilize more CCA's from Ag Sector in your TSP initiatives.
- All of this work should be done in consultation with other agencies and entities doing the work already, so it is coordinated.





United States Department of Agriculture



Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

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